

Antelope Valley AQMD

California Environmental Quality Act
(CEQA)

and

Federal Conformity

Guidelines

August 2011

AVAQMD Planning, Rule-making and Grants Section
AVAQMD Surveillance Section

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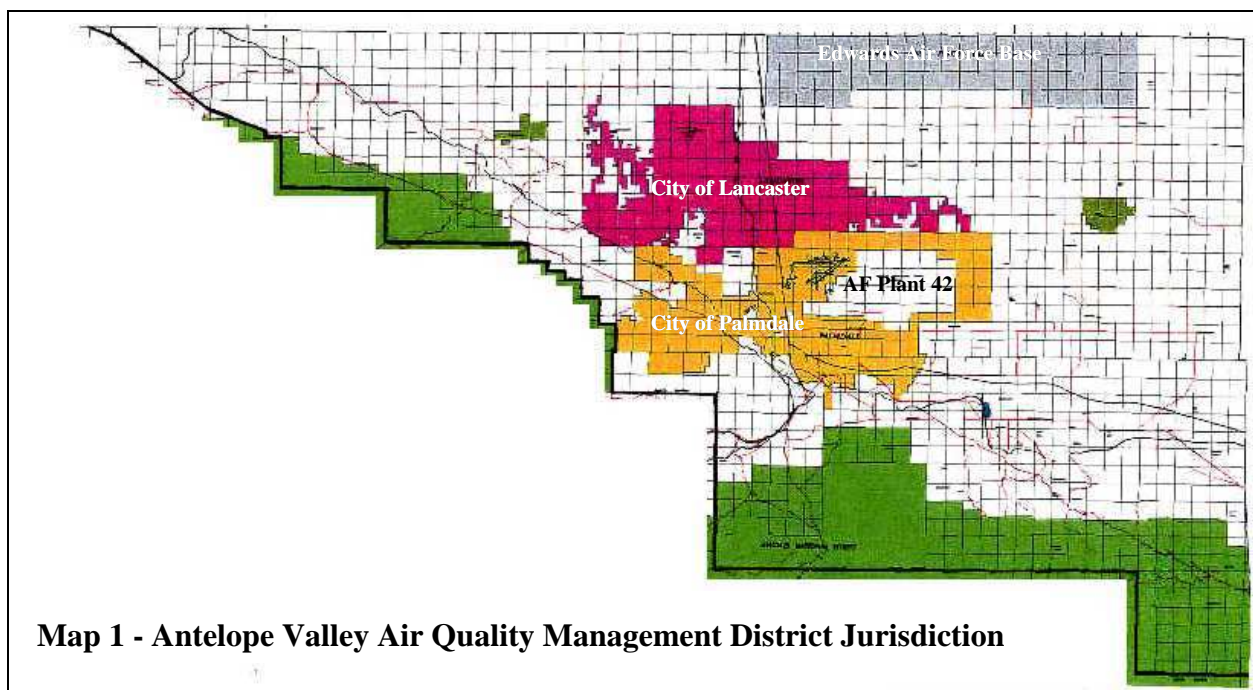
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Background

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the AVAQMD (District) is an expert commenting agency on air quality and related matters within its jurisdiction (or impacting on its jurisdiction). The District has dedicated resources to reviewing projects to ensure that they will not: (1) cause or contribute to any new violation of any air quality standard; (2) increase the frequency or severity of any existing violation of any air quality standard; or (3) delay timely attainment of any air quality standard or any required interim emission reductions or other milestones of any federal attainment plan. The District has adopted a federal attainment plan for ozone pursuant to the Federal Clean Air Act.

Purpose

These Guidelines are intended to assist persons preparing environmental analysis or review documents for any project within the jurisdiction of the District by providing background information and guidance on the preferred analysis approach.



Jurisdiction

The District has jurisdiction over the northern, desert portion of Los Angeles County (please refer to Map 1). This region includes the incorporated cities of Lancaster and Palmdale, Air Force Plant 42, and the southern portion of Edwards Air Force Base. The Kern County-Los Angeles County boundary forms the northern boundary of the District; the San Bernardino-Los Angeles County boundary forms the eastern boundary of the District.

Non-attainment Designations and Classification Status

The United States Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board have designated portions of the District non-attainment for a variety of pollutants, and some of those designations have an associated classification. Please refer to Table 1 for a chart of these designations and classifications.

Table 1 – AVAQMD Designations and Classifications

Ambient Air Quality Standard	AVAQMD
One-hour Ozone (Federal) – standard has been revoked, this is historical information only	Non-attainment; classified Severe-17
Eight-hour Ozone (Federal 84 ppb)	Subpart 2 Non-attainment; classified Moderate
Eight-hour Ozone (Federal new standard, 75 ppb or lower)	Non-attainment (expected)
Ozone (State)	Nonattainment; classified Extreme
PM ₁₀ (Federal)	Unclassified
PM _{2.5} (Federal)	Unclassified/attainment
PM _{2.5} (State)	Unclassified
PM ₁₀ (State)	Non-attainment
Carbon Monoxide (State and Federal)	Attainment
Nitrogen Dioxide (State and Federal)	Attainment/unclassified
Sulfur Dioxide (State and Federal)	Attainment/unclassified
Lead (State and Federal)	Attainment
Particulate Sulfate (State)	Unclassified
Hydrogen Sulfide (State)	Unclassified
Visibility Reducing Particles (State)	Unclassified

Attainment Plans

The District has adopted a single attainment plan for ozone. Please refer to Table 2 for information regarding this attainment plan.

Table 2 – AVAQMD Attainment Plans

Name of Plan	Date of Adoption	Standard(s) Targeted	Applicable Area	Pollutant(s) Targeted	Attainment Date
AVAQMD 2004 Ozone Attainment Plan (State and Federal)	4/2004	Federal one hour ozone	Entire District	NO _x and VOC	2007
AVAQMD Federal 8-Hour Ozone Attainment Plan	5/20/2008	Federal eight hour ozone (84 ppb)	Entire District	NO _x and VOC	2021

Rules and Regulations

The District maintains a set of Rules and Regulations to improve air quality and maintain good air quality. Please contact the District to obtain a copy of the District rulebook, or visit www.avaqmd.ca.gov.

Recommended Environmental Setting Elements***Air Quality Data***

The District gathers a variety of air quality data at the Lancaster monitoring site. Table 3 details the data available from the District for this site.

Table 3 - Available Air Quality Data

Site	Address	Pollutants	Dates
Lancaster	W. Ponderosa	O ₃ , NO _x , CO, PM ₁₀ (Hi-Vol and TEOM)	7/1/97 to 11/01
Lancaster	W. Ponderosa	PM _{2.5}	1/1/99 to 11/01
Lancaster	43301 Division St.	O ₃ , NO _x , CO, PM ₁₀ (Hi-Vol and TEOM), PM _{2.5}	11/01 to present

Meteorological Data

A variety of meteorological data is available from the District for the Lancaster site. Table 4 contains a list of the data available for the Lancaster site.

Table 4 - Available Meteorological Data

Site	Address	Data	Dates
Lancaster	W. Ponderosa	Wind speed/direction, pressure, temperature, humidity	7/1/97 to 11/01
Lancaster	43301 Division St.	Wind speed/direction, pressure, temperature, humidity	11/01 to present

Topography and Climate Discussion

The District covers a western portion of the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). The MDAB is an assemblage of mountain ranges interspersed with long broad valleys that often contain dry lakes. Many of the lower mountains which dot the vast terrain rise from 1,000 to 4,000 feet above the valley floor. Prevailing winds in the MDAB are out of the west and southwest. These prevailing winds are due to the proximity of the MDAB to coastal and central regions and the blocking nature of the Sierra Nevada mountains to the north; air masses pushed onshore in southern California by differential heating are channeled through the MDAB. The MDAB is separated from the southern California coastal and central California valley regions by mountains (highest elevation approximately 10,000 feet), whose passes form the main channels for these air masses. The Antelope Valley is bordered in the northwest by the Tehachapi Mountains, separated from the Sierra Nevadas in the north by the Tehachapi Pass (3,800 ft elevation). The Antelope Valley is bordered in the south by the San Gabriel Mountains, bisected by Soledad Canyon (3,300 ft).

During the summer the MDAB is generally influenced by a Pacific Subtropical High cell that sits off the coast, inhibiting cloud formation and encouraging daytime solar heating. The MDAB is rarely influenced by cold air masses moving south from Canada and Alaska, as these frontal systems are weak and diffuse by the time they reach the desert. Most desert moisture arrives from infrequent warm, moist and unstable air masses from the south. As can be seen from Table 5, the MDAB averages between three and seven inches of precipitation per year (from 16 to 30 days with at least 0.01 inches of precipitation). The MDAB is classified as a dry-hot desert climate (BWh), with portions classified as dry-very hot desert (BWbh), to indicate at least three months have maximum average temperatures over 100.4° F.

Table 5 - MDAB Average Precipitation and Evaporation History

Location	Precipitation (inches)	Precipitation (days)	Evaporation (inches)	Length of Observations (years)
Trona	3.82	16		48
Randsburg	5.89	23		48
China Lake	4.42			34
Goldstone Echo	5.42	20		23
Daggett Airport	3.87	23		48
Barstow Fire	4.60	23		16
Barstow CIMIS	5.10	27	70	22
Granite Mountain	5.76	22		5
Victorville CIMIS	7.30	29	63	15
Mitchell Caverns	10.41	32		38
Mountain Pass	7.63	28		41
Parker Reservoir	5.38	24		48
Needles Airport	4.55	23		48
Twentynine Palms	3.95	19		48
Blythe Airport	3.57	17		48
Iron Mountain	3.40	19		48

Recommended Impacts Discussion Elements

Direct Impacts

Direct impacts are the result of the project itself (from its construction and operation), in the form of project activity and trips generated by the project. For example, in the case of a subdivision project, construction emissions (equipment exhaust, wind erosion, vehicle exhaust), housing use activity (natural gas consumption) and trips to and from the housing (vehicle exhaust, tire wear) represent direct impacts. In the case of a new mine project, construction emissions (equipment exhaust, wind erosion, vehicle exhaust), material handling (drilling, blasting, transfers, crushing, screening, bagging), operational emissions (wind erosion, vehicle travel, vehicle exhaust, tire wear), and employee/customer/delivery travel (vehicle exhaust, tire wear) represent direct impacts.

Indirect Impacts

Indirect impacts are the result of changes that would not occur without the project. In the case of a subdivision project, indirect impacts on the surrounding community can be generated in many ways: nearby construction of roadways (or roadway modifications) and other infrastructure to support the subdivision, construction and operation of new commercial/retail establishments, changes in traffic/circulation patterns that result in increased congestion/delays, etc. In the case of a new mine project, indirect impacts can be generated by nearby construction of infrastructure to support the mine, housing constructed and/or occupied by mine employees, changes in traffic/circulation patterns that result in increased congestion/delays, etc.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are similar to direct and indirect impacts of the project, which the project contributes to. In the case of a subdivision project, a given project has a cumulative impact with all other subdivision projects, from the standpoint of each type of impact (cumulative construction emissions, residential natural gas consumption, solvent use, transportation emissions, congestion, etc.). Similarly, a new mine project has a cumulative impact with all other mining projects, from the standpoint of each type of impact (cumulative construction emissions, diesel equipment emissions, blasting emissions, fugitive emissions, transportation, congestion, etc.).

Conformity Impacts

A project is non-conforming if it conflicts with or delays implementation of any applicable attainment or maintenance plan. A project is conforming if it complies with all applicable District rules and regulations, complies with all proposed control measures that are not yet adopted from the applicable plan(s), and is consistent with the growth forecasts in the applicable plan(s) (or is directly included in the applicable plan). Conformity with growth forecasts can be established by demonstrating that the project is consistent with the land use plan that was used to generate the growth forecast. An example of a non-conforming project would be one that increases the gross number of dwelling units, increases the number of trips, and/or increases the overall vehicle miles traveled in an affected area (relative to the applicable land use plan).

Sensitive Receptor Land Uses

Residences, schools, daycare centers, playgrounds and medical facilities are considered sensitive receptor land uses. The following project types proposed for sites within the specified distance to an existing or planned (zoned) sensitive receptor land use must be evaluated using significance threshold criteria number 4 (refer to the significance threshold discussion):

- Any industrial project within 1000 feet;
- A distribution center (40 or more trucks per day) within 1000 feet;
- A major transportation project (50,000 or more vehicles per day) within 1000 feet;
- A dry cleaner using perchloroethylene within 500 feet;
- A gasoline dispensing facility within 300 feet.

Recommended Substantiation Discussion Elements

For projects applying the emissions-based significance thresholds, project emissions quantification is required. In addition the environmental documentation must include support for the quantification methodology used, including emission factors, emission factors source, assumptions, and sample calculations where necessary. For projects using a calculation tool such as URBEMIS, the support section must specify the inputs and settings used for the evaluation.

Significance Thresholds

Any project is significant if it triggers or exceeds the most appropriate evaluation criteria. The District will clarify upon request which threshold is most appropriate for a given project; in general, the emissions comparison (criteria number 1) is sufficient:

1. Generates total emissions (direct and indirect) in excess of the thresholds given in Table 6;
2. Generates a violation of any ambient air quality standard when added to the local background;
3. Does not conform with the applicable attainment or maintenance plan(s) ¹;
4. Exposes sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, including those resulting in a cancer risk greater than or equal to 10 in a million and/or a Hazard Index (HI) (non-cancerous) greater than or equal to 1.*

**Refer to the Sensitive Receptor Land Use discussion above*

A significant project must incorporate mitigation sufficient to reduce its impact to a level that is not significant. A project that cannot be mitigated to a level that is not significant must incorporate all feasible mitigation. Note that the emission thresholds are given as a daily value and an annual value, so that a multi-phased project (such as a project with a construction phase and a separate operational phase) with phases shorter than one year can be compared to the daily value.

¹ A project is deemed to not exceed this threshold, and hence not be significant, if it is consistent with the existing land use plan. Zoning changes, specific plans, general plan amendments and similar land use plan changes which do not increase dwelling unit density, do not increase vehicle trips, and do not increase vehicle miles traveled are also deemed to not exceed this threshold.

Table 6 – Significant Emissions Thresholds

Criteria Pollutant	Annual Threshold (tons)	Daily Threshold (pounds)
Greenhouse Gases (CO ₂ e)	100,000	548,000
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	100	548
Oxides of Nitrogen (NO _x)	25	137
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	25	137
Oxides of Sulfur (SO _x)	25	137
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	15	82
Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	15	82
Hydrogen Sulfide (H ₂ S)	10	54
Lead (Pb)	0.6	3

District Contacts

If an address is not listed, please use the general address, to the attention of the listed individual.

AVAQMD General and Rulebook	Crystal Bates (661) 723-8070 ext. 1
	Mailing and Physical Address: 43301 Division St., Suite 206 Lancaster, CA 93535-4649
Air Quality and Meteorological Data	Fred Wohosky (760) 245-1661 x1921
CEQA and Conformity	Tracy Walters (760) 245-1661 x6122
Permitting	Sam Oktay (760) 245-1661 x1610

Appendix A – Basic Definitions of Major Air Pollutants

Technical and/or legal definitions exist for many of these pollutants, depending on context. The following definitions are for general, introductory purposes only:

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) – Common product of combustion. Not a criteria pollutant, but considered an important “greenhouse gas.” Important on a national or global scale.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) – Common product of incomplete combustion. A criteria pollutant with state and federal standards. Not a primary photochemical reaction compound, but involved in photochemical reactions. Dissipates rapidly, and is therefore only important on a local scale near sources.

Criteria Pollutants – Those air pollutants specifically identified for control under the Federal Clean Air Act (currently six: carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, lead, sulfur oxides, ozone and particulates).

Lead (Pb) – A heavy metal, present in the environment mainly due to historical use in motor vehicle fuel. Primarily associated with lead smelting operations. A criteria pollutant with state and federal standards. Primarily of concern near sources.

Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x) – Common product of combustion in the presence of nitrogen. Includes NO₂, which is a criteria pollutant with state and federal standards. Locally and regionally important due to its involvement in the photochemical formation of ozone.

Oxides of Sulfur (SO_x) – Common product of combustion in the presence of sulfur. Associated primarily with diesel and coal burning. Includes SO₂, a criteria pollutant with state and federal standards. Primarily of concern near sources.

Ozone (O₃) – A gas mainly produced by a photochemical reaction between reactive organic gases and oxides of nitrogen in the presence of sunlight (also produced by molecular oxygen in the presence of ultraviolet light or electrical discharge). A strong oxidant that is damaging at ground level but necessary at high altitude (in the stratosphere, where it absorbs dangerous ultraviolet light). Also considered an important greenhouse gas. A criteria pollutant with state and federal standards.

Particulate Matter (TSP or PM₃₀) – Solid or liquid matter suspended in the atmosphere, excluding water. Includes aerosols and droplets that form in the atmosphere. Locally and regionally important.

Reactive/Volatile Organic Compounds/Gases (ROG, VOC, NMOG, NMOC) – A portion of total organic compounds or gases, excludes methane, ethane and acetone (due to low photochemical reactivity). “ROG” is generally used by the California Air Resources Board, “VOC” is generally used by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, but all four terms are interchangeable for most uses. Regionally important due to its involvement in the photochemical reaction that produces ozone.

Respirable Particulate Matter (coarse or PM₁₀, and fine or PM_{2.5}) – That portion of particulate matter that tends to penetrate into the human lung. The subscript refers to aerodynamic diameter. Criteria pollutants with state and federal standards. Locally and regionally important.

Total Organic Compounds/Gases (TOC or TOG) – Compounds containing at least one atom of carbon, except carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, carbonic acid, metallic carbides and metallic carbonates. Primarily methane in the atmosphere, a “greenhouse gas.”